

Message Text

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ORIGIN SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 H-02 L-03 DHA-02 SCA-01 /018 R

DRAFTED BY SCA:SCS:AAGISE:JFM

APPROVED BY SCA:SCS:AGISE

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P 122303Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL MAZATLAN PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, CDES, MX

SUBJECT: (CLOSE, JACK LAVERNE AKA WILLIAM H. FORD)

REF: STATE 27397 AND SUBSEQUENT TELEGRAMS FROM POST RE
SUBJECT.

1. THE ADMINISTRATOR TESTIFIED IN EXECUTIVE SESSION MONDAY
FEBRUARY 9 BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL
POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS ON THE DEATH OF JACK CLOSE.
THE REACTION TO OUR PRELIMINARY REPORT WAS SKEPTICAL AND WE
EXPECT TO BE RECALLED FOR FURTHER TESTIMONY WITHIN A WEEK
TO TEN DAYS. THEREFORE POST IS REQUESTED TO TELEGRAPH ASAP
A REPORT IN DETAIL COVERING THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) THE ESCAPE ATTEMPT: WHO AND HOW MANY PERSONS (BOTH
MEXICAN AND AMERICANS) WERE INVOLVED? WAS CLOSE THE RING

LEADER? WHAT WAS HIS SPECIFIC TASK? WHY DID THE ATTEMPT
FAIL? DID OTHER AMERICANS HAVE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF IT?
HOW DID THE ESCAPEES OBTAIN THE WEAPONS AND ARMS? WHY DID
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THE ESCAPE ATTEMPT FAIL? ANY INDICATION THAT POLICE HAD

BEEN TIPPED OFF? WHY WAS THE CHIEF OF POLICE THERE AT THAT
PRECISE MOMENT? WERE ANY PRISONERS KILLED IN THE ATTEMPT?

(B) CIRCUMSTANCES OF CLOSE'S DEATH: WHAT TIME ELAPSED BE-

TWEEN THE FAILURE OF THE ATTEMPT AND CLOSE'S RETURN TO HIS
CELL? DID ANYBODY ELSE BESIDES GRIGGS WITNESS CLOSE'S
ENTERING HIS SHED ALONE? WAS THERE ANY EVIDENCE PRIOR TO
THE ATTEMPT THAT CLOSE WAS DESPONDENT? WHY WOULD CLOSE BE
DESPONDENT TO THE POINT WHERE HE WOULD TAKE HIS OWN LIFE?
WAS HE POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED BY GUARDS AS ATTEMPTING TO
ESCAPE? DID HE FEAR REPRISALS FROM HIS FELLOW ESCAPEES OR
PRISONERS? WHAT TIME ELAPSED AFTER CLOSE'S DEATH AND
NOTIFICATION TO THE CONSULATE? WAS A REQUEST MADE TO VIEW
THE BODY?

(C) WERE ANY MEXICAN PRISONERS INTERROGATED IMMEDIATELY
AFTER THE ESCAPE AND SIMILARLY MISTREATED AS THE AMERICANS?
IS HARSH TREATMENT BY GUARDS S.O.P. AT MAZATLAN CITY JAIL?

2. THE ABOVE QUESTIONS ARE ASKED IN AN EFFORT TO DETERMINE:
A) WHETHER CLOSE HAD BEEN INTERROGATED BY POLICE, MISTREAT-
ED AND DIED FROM SUCH MISTREATMENT WHICH WAS THEN MADE TO
LOOK LIKE A SUICIDE; B) WHETHER THE AMERICAN PRISONERS
INTERVIEWED BY THE CONSULAR OFFICER TESTIFYING TO A SUICIDE
IN FEAR OF REPRISALS FROM FELLOW PRISONERS, GUARDS OR
MEXICAN OFFICIALS; AND C) WHAT LED THE POST TO BELIEVE
THAT THERE WERE NO POSSIBILITIES OF DEATH OTHER THAN SUICIDE
WHICH WOULD OBTAIN THE NEED FOR AN AUTOPSY. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ShawDG
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE035130
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SCS:AAGISE:JFM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760054-0702
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760254/aaaabuut.tel
Line Count: 90
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SCS
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 27397
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 NOV 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2004 by coburnhl>; WITHDRAWN <28 OCT 2004 by buchant0, PRIVACY>; RELEASED <04 NOV 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <04 NOV 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: (CLOSE, JACK LAVERNE AKA WILLIAM H. FORD)
TAGS: CASC, CDES, MX, (CLOSE, JACK LAVERNE), (FORD, WILLIAM H)
To: MAZATLAN
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006